

DEDICATION OF THE JAMES E. MCCORMACK COUNCIL ROOM*

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IT is an honor and a privilege to have been asked by our president, Norbert Roberts, to respond on the occasion of the presentation of a plaque and the dedication and naming of the James E. McCormack Council Room on the fifth floor of the New York Academy of Medicine.

The friendship and admiration I always had for this warm, thoughtful, and brilliant physician spanned 45 years. I shared with his family and our Academy this great loss, but today we meet to pay Jim tribute, homage, and honor.

LEST WE FORGET

It is difficult to believe that Doctor Jim left us just about eight months ago. On this very date, a year ago, he met with an *ad hoc* Group on the Medical Malpractice Crisis in New York State following a dinner meeting with the Committee on Medicine in Society on May 27, 1981, in Room 21. It was just one of scores of conferences, seminars, dinners, and meetings in which the involvement of our director was so valuable and timely! All of his efforts were directed to improvements in the house of medicine over the 41 years of his career.

Anecdotally, lest we forget, the physician whose memory we honor today labored assiduously, as stated by President Roberts and Acting Director Lieberman this afternoon. To add to his remembrance, we recall now some of the broad sweeps of his leadership. Who can forget the roles he has played—they are too numerous to itemize and I shall not attempt to do so, but I shall briefly refer to three. His career embraced, with the late Dr. Willard Rappelye while associate dean at Columbia and assistant professor of medicine, writing two landmark publications on the role, plight, and destiny of the foreign medical graduates pouring into this country about three decades ago—still most timely today—and the total

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dedication he gave to developing and perfecting the Berry Plan with the late Dr. Frank Berry, another bright luminary member of this Academy. American medicine was indeed the better off because of the efforts of this program—graduate programs, needed optimism, support for the people and families in the Armed Forces, and improvements in the training of young physicians in many of our medical disciplines resulted from this work. And let us not forget Jim's great contributions to keeping in order the financial stability of the Academy and the care and protection of the endowments it possesses today. Yet he saw to it that progress in the refurbishing of our meeting rooms, medical library, parking areas, and the general appearance of this famous historical landmark came about, and they are testimonies to his foresight and leadership.

Lest we forget—there are not many who played such important roles as assistant, associate dean, and dean and, yes, president in three of our great metropolitan colleges of medicine—I refer of course to New York University (1942-1951), Columbia (1951-1955), the Seton Hall College of Medicine and Dentistry (1960-1965), and the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry (1965-1966). Throughout all of these educational and administrative posts he maintained the title and clinical interest of a practitioner in internal medicine—from an instructor, assistant in medicine to associate, to assistant professor and consultant—at Bellevue, New York University, Lenox Hill, George Washington University, and Columbia's attending staffs.

Lest we forget, his service to our national, state, and local governments was also impressive—the office of Scientific Research and Development Technical Aide, Committee on Medical Research, the Research and Development Board, Department of Defense, his heading up the Medical Advisory Committee to the Selective Service System in New York City from 1950-1957, and 16 years as consultant and member of the Civilian Health and Medical Advisory Council of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health and Medical), serving under Drs. Richard Meiling, Frank Berry, Shirley Fisk, and Louis Rousselot. In addition to being a consultant to the Public Health Service of the National Institutes of Health, he also served as a member of both Health Research Councils of the City of New York (1967-1975) and of the State of New York (1975-1981). His contributions as a member or chairman of two of the Veterans' Administration Dean's Committees—in New York City at Kingsbridge (1946-1955) and in New Jersey at East Orange (1960-1966)—spanned two decades.

A Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the American Association for Advancement of Science, Alpha Omega Alpha, Sigma Xi, the Harvey Society, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the New York Academy of Medicine from 1947, the New York Heart Association, the Society of Alumni of Bellevue Hospital, the American Medical Association, and the New York County and State Societies are only a few professional and scientific organizations from the litany of associations in which he left his mark.

Special honors from his government, which he served so well, were always accepted quietly, with pride and appreciation, modestly and never, ever, boastfully. The Army Navy Certificate of Appreciation (1948), the Presidential Certificate of Appreciation (1957) for work with Selective Service, the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal of the Department of Defense (1971) for service with the Advisory Council from 1954-1971, and the Merit Award of the Public Health Association of New York City (1977) are but a few of his well-earned and justly deserved honors.

And finally, lest we forget, no man could have borne so many responsibilities, cared compassionately for so many people, and valiantly defended so many sound positions in medical affairs without a happy home where love and life were durably and radiantly reflected in the devotion of his wife Ann, their two daughters, and four sons—having been born between 1955 and 1967, the oldest, who is 27, and the youngest boy, 16, were the source of much happiness, pride, and the normal concerns parents have during the last 26 years of his life.

I am certain that the New York Academy of Medicine will never forget Dr. Jim McCormack.